

Asking Good Questions:
101 Ways to Foster Excellent Communication
in the Music Classroom
K-COMTEP/SENSENEY MUSIC SUMMIT
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0. Quiet raised hand

Ways to “take the temperature” of the room (assess fast and go on)

1. Sign language for IDK, yes, no
2. More advanced sign language (“go on” “need more practice”, etc.)
3. Fist-to-five
4. Use ABC letter hand signs and show all (multiple choice)
 - 4a. Use ABC letter hand signs in front of body (more private)
5. Thumbs up/thumbs down
6. Body positioning: stand up, hunch, or make a ball (representing degrees of understanding/readiness)
7. Take a simple vote
 - 7a. Take a vote with a campaign to convince others
8. Windshield question: Clear, Bugs, or Mud
9. Silently mouth the answer
10. Write the answer in the air

Source for “The Right Answer Game” : Bartholomew, D. (1994). *Fielding Answers, Cadenza,*

38 (2) 18-19 or <http://songworkseducatorsassociation.com/articles/the-right-answer-game.pdf>

Quick ways to add variety and interest to responses
(the key is to do these a lot, and mix them up for constant fresh energy.)

11. Tell your neighbor
12. Tell both of your neighbors
13. 1 2 3: All call out answer
14. 1 2 3: whisper answer
15. Find someone across the room and tell them your answer: without moving! 😊
16. Give your answer forte, piano
17. Short, long (staccato, legato)
18. Fast, slow (allegro, adagio)
19. High pitch/low pitch
20. Crescendo
21. Clap eighths for one answer, clap half notes for another
22. Start a conversation (it's like a dinner party)
23. Ask SURPRISING QUESTIONS –“What color does this make you think of?”
“Sarah did you have a good weekend?”
24. Ask the most surprising question of all- “Why are we doing this?”
25. Ask non-surprising questions – put them on the board ahead of time
26. Wait time (>+ 10 seconds): person with quick clarity on answer may not be deepest/most divergent thinker
27. Explain this in 1 word...3 words...5 words
28. Close eyes, raise hands
29. Use #28 and go around and hear whispered answers
30. Stand up if you know the answer, choose one to respond
31. Stand up if you know the answer, choose ALL to respond
32. Have student pick the responder
33. Allow time and space for collaboration between students before responding (i.e. let them *talk* about their answer before they offer it)
34. Let them talk about their answer *after* they offer it (“I was thinking that... but now I think...”)
35. Tweet (short answer) and retweet
36. Ask follow-ups : “Why? How do you know? Do you agree? Will you give an example? Tell me more?”
37. Ask for summary of last minute
38. Ask for summary of what we just learned
39. Allow students to ask their own questions of other students
40. Walking or moving to corners (“vote with your feet”)
41. Make up movements: act out the answer, charades
42. Popcorn: You call on first person, they pick the next person
43. Call on multiple people right in a row quickly (boom boom boom)
44. Call and response in rhythm
45. Toss the koosh ball

Ways to get to creative or critical thinking

46. So-called “open-ended” questions are good but usually not enough. Cue responses: “There is not a single right/wrong answer... I want you to think of many answers.”
47. Ask students to describe/explain how they arrived at their answer
48. Ask other students to describe/explain how they think someone arrived at an answer
49. If you could only take 2 [songs, patterns, instruments, whatever] on a trip with you, what would they be, and why?
50. If we performed this for [the school, your teacher, the principal, your parents] what do you think they would say?

Ways to let students signal YOU

51. SOS (sign “help”)
52. Tap wrist/watch = “I need more time.”

Plan-ahead ideas

53. Ring in on bells
54. Write answer on white board (\$1 store) and show you
55. Write answer on white board and hold it over head
56. Turn around, write answer on white board and hold it up
57. Clear plastic plates & dry-erase marker with a worksheet underneath
58. Paint chips (good for indicating degrees of something, Likert scale)
59. Ticket out the door (written or verbal)
60. Come up and place the magnet where you think we are in this process
61. Come up and place the magnet on a continuum of any kind (think of the “pain scale”)
62. Put a magnet where we are, and put a magnet where we can be after the next run-through
63. Super-secret, super-important question hidden around room
64. Post or have “sentence starters” ready: (“I like the way they...” “I would suggest to...”)
65. Groups of four with one white board, spinner calls number for designated representative to respond
“Numbered Heads Together, 1-2-3”
Write a new answer for each person (same as above but 4 different answers)
68. Give everyone in the class an index card with a question. Respond to the question throughout the lesson.
69. Colored cards for color-coded responses
70. Uno cards- each color a different instrument family, a different multiple choice answer, etc.
71. Pass out beanie babies and have them tell the animal the answer (yes they are going to play, and yes that’s ok!)

Hear from a group

72. Yarn groups (woods, metal, skin, combinations)
73. Instrument groups have to quickly coalesce around an answer (clarinets)
73. Color-coded cards to quickly break into “thinking groups”

Drill for memorization

74. Create an ostinato of the answer
75. Create a complementary part elaborating on the answer
76. Create a final line or coda
77. Assign a gesture you use consistently with a common response (same/different, duple/triple, loud/quiet)

Pair 'em up

78. Think-pair-share
79. Share your partner's answer
80. Share your pair's answer with another pair
81. Sing to each other, face-to-face, knee-to-knee (knee-to-knee helps maintain a close yet comfortable, reassuring distance.)
82. Stand up, hand up, pair up (it's not just for folk dance)

"Group-thinks": help students to "gel" or stay in sync as a group

83. Ask a question that requires students to use "we" language as much as possible
84. Have students direct their playing or singing to person nearby
85. Have students direct their playing or singing to person across the room
Find ways to get students to take ownership of OTHERS' ideas ("Tell me why Karen's idea is a good one.")
86. Ask students to pick three people to offer input. Write names on board.
(interesting take on class dynamics, which are important.)
87. Ask students to write a question or comment on a post-it. Work as a group to categorize into like sections in front of room (they may see that many of them are thinking the same thing.)

Ways that may need to be "Carefully Taught"

88. Use think-alouds
89. Fish bowl: Use a small group in front of the room to model a demonstration task in a "fish bowl" for the rest to watch
90. I have, who has (cards) "I have $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature, who has B Major key signature." "I have B Major, who has the mark *tenuto*?"
91. Quiz, quiz, trade* (from kaganonline.com; instructions at end of handout)
92. Students use school terminology: proficient, emerging, developing, budding, or promising.
93. Charades (have kids who know act out the answer for others)
94. Offer "two stars and a wish" (2 commendations and 1 recommendation)
95. Dance your answer
96. Freeze your body in a way that best represents your answer
97. In a group of four, arrange yourself in order of worst to best answer
98. In a group of four, arrange yourself in order of least favorite to most favorite answer
99. At an instrument, play your answer (assign a motive representing an answer)
100. Rally Robin: sit with a partner and trade as many brief answers back and forth as you can, noting how many you can come up with (a Kagan classic)
101. Sing designated solfege for an answer (*So-mi-do* is no, *do-mi-so* is yes, etc)
102. It's up to YOU :)

Quiz-Quiz-Trade

Quiz-Quiz-Trade is a seven-step process. You must first have note cards that have questions on one side and answers on the other side. Give each student one of these cards.

Step 1. Have students stand-up, put their hands-up and then pair-up with someone else who has their hand up.

Step 2. Partner A quizzes.

Step 3. Partner B answers.

Step 4. Partner A coaches or praises.

Step 5. Switch roles.

Steps 6. Partners trades cards and raise their hands to find new partners.

Step 7. Repeat steps 1-6 a number of times.

From kaganonline.com

YOUR IDEAS!

www.flipgrid.com - a great free app and website to let kids answer questions by making a quick (90 second or less) video answer.